1712

THE CRISIS.

THE

CRISIS:

OR, SEASONABLE

ADVICE

TO THE

Freeholders of *Great-Britain.*

Pulchrum eſt benefacere Reipublicæ, etiam benedicere haud abſurdum eſt. ——

Salluſt.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by P. MEIGHAN, at *Gray's-Inn-Gate*, in *Holborn*; and T. PAYNE, at the *Crown* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*, 1722. Price Three Pence.

THE

CRISIS:

OR, SEASONABLE

ADVICE

TO THE

Freeholders of Great-Britain.

Publishing of seditious and unlawful Libels, criminal
by Indictment, and the Punishment of
Small.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by J. Millar, A. & C. Walker, and
all Booksellers; and T. Payne, at the Crown in Pater-
Noster-Row, 1734.

Price Three Pence.

THE CRISIS:

OR, SEASONABLE ADVICE TO THE Freeholders of *Great-Britain.*

IT is a melancholy (tho' juſt) Obſervation, made by conſidering Men, That, whilſt we abound with *Complaints*, we are ſupplied but with few *Remedies*; either Paſſions or Prejudices lead and influence Opinions, or Authoritative Power procures a blind and obſequious Compliance; the free Uſe of Reaſon is often interrupted or perverted, and the Right which belongs to us, to judge for *our ſelves*, blindly ſurrendred to *others*, who often make us their *own Property*, whilſt they pretend the Security of *ours:* Nothing is more certain, than the Right every Man has to the fair and free Uſe of his own Reaſon; and indeed the Variety of Opinions proceeds not from any Diſtriction in ſettled and common Right,

but the Difference ariſes from the right or wrong Uſe of the Underſtanding. In the Caſe of Elections, *every Voter* has an undoubted Right, which ſtrongly obliges him, to inquire (in the beſt manner he is able) into the true Character of the Perſon he deſigns to repreſent him: Therefore, to prevent the Abuſes ſo frequently complain'd of, (and at this *critical Juncture* ſo much dreaded,) I ſhall fairly and honeſtly endeavour, to remind the Man of Knowledge and Probity what Duty he owes his *Country*, and at the ſame Time lay down Rules and Inſtructions for the Service of ſuch, who are leſs knowing, whereby to judge, How much their *Happineſs*, or *Miſery*, depends upon their *own Choice*.

IT is, I think, pretty evident, That the High Court of *Parliament* is the Bulwark to the Rights and Liberties of the People; and that every Repreſentative choſen by them, are the Perſons entruſted with the Nation's Intereſt; and the Regard which ought to be had to a prudent and wiſe Choice, in a Truſt of ſuch *Importance*, well deſerves a ſerious and rational Conſideration: And, as this Diſcourſe is offer'd to all the Freeholders of *Great Britain*, 'tis to be hop'd, none will inſiſt ſo much upon the Ornaments of Speech, as upon Truth and Right Reaſon; this being not intended to amuſe the Curious, ſo much as to inſtruct and aſſiſt the honeſt and well-meaning *Countryman*, who is generally led more by *perſonal Intereſt*, or *Bribery*, than true Regard to the Service of his *Country*. I ſhall avoid mentioning any Diſtinction of Parties, further, than that they regard the *Proteſtant Succeſſion*, as being this Nation's Bleſſing and Security; If ſo, Whether they be call'd *Whigs*, or *Tories*, matters not, *provided*, they be Honeſt Men: For, to ſpeak Truth, There are Good and Bad of both Denominations; but, the Force of Prejudice and Violence does ſo often interrupt the *Free Voice* of an honeſt Freeholder, that he is led to diſpiſe a Good Man without Knowledge, and to ſerve a Wicked One, to oblige another (perhaps) as Bad: I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to offer ſuch Methods, as may give the *Voters* a Light and Knowledge in their Proceedings.

NOTWITHSTANDING our late Misfortunes, 'tis a Comfort to reflect, That we live at preſent under a Government which allows, (and has promis'd to ſupport us in) our juſt Rights and

and Liberties; and leſt, at any Time, there ſhou'd be private Endeavours to diſturb our Peace, to ſerve Party-Rage, or private Perſons, it is the indiſpenſable Duty of all *true Engliſhmen*, to maintain the Privileges convey'd from their Anceſtors, through ſo many Generations, *inviolable*; upon which all our *(Earthly*, and in a great Meaſure our *Spiritual)* Happineſs, Safety, and Well-being depends; nor can any Man in his Senſes but acknowledge, That the only right Way to attain the *End*, is, to look well to the *Means*; and that is, by taking due Care *what Perſons* we chuſe for our *Repreſentatives*; with whom we muſt truſt our *Eſtates*, *Lives*, and *Liberties*.

NOW, in this Government of a Prince, by and with Parliaments, whenever the Condition and the Neceſſities of the State require them, however, according to it's Primitive Inſtitutions, it was the beſt of all others, yet, as well in that, as in Chriſtianity itſelf, there have been found out Ways of *Corruption*; and that is, when either they ſit *too long*, or *too ſeldom*, or are too frequently *diſſolv'd*: Too frequent Diſſolutions being no leſs dangerous to the Subject, than too long Seſſions. *Nevertheleſs*, It may be in the *Electors* Power, to avoid the Inconveniencies of *both*; and, that is, by making a *good Choice*.

WHEREAS, If the Country People will ſell All that they have, for preſent ſenſual Gratifications, or corrupt Allurements, *chuſing* Him that gives moſt *To-Day*, tho' they know *Him* to be a Perſon, who will ſell their Religion, Liberties, and Fortunes *To-Morrow*, then frequent Diſſolutions will of Neceſſity ruin us, and debauch our Conſtitution: For, the honeſt Country Gentleman, deſigning no other private Advantage, but the true Service of his King and Country, hath no Reaſon, nor is he able, frequently, to ſpend large Sums of Money, only to purchaſe a Place full of Labour, Charge, Trouble, and Danger, without any Profit to himſelf, *meerly* to ſerve thoſe who put him to ſo unkind Expence: And when honeſt Gentlemen are thus diſcourag'd, if this extravagant Humour amongſt *Electors* continue, the *Papiſts* and their *Faction*, or Neceſſitous Perſons, of proſtituted Conſciences, will carry their Votes; for *they* can afford to buy them at

large Rates, being resolv'd to repay themselves, tho' with the Ruin of the Nation.

THIS is no vain Surmize, nor idle Speculation, but the very Truth of the Case; and the meanest Country-Man, that has Eyes in his Head, and will use them, cannot but see it: For, Did you ever know Persons buy Places, but for the Profits or Advantages that attend 'em? Therefore, Whoever you put to Charge in your *Elections*, blame him not, if he makes Money again of what he bought, and lays out his Vote in the *House*, not for *your Good* and that of the *Publick*, but such Way, as will best please the Ministers of State, that so himself may obtain a Good Place, or Preferment, or Title of Honour by the *Bargain*. I say, tho' he himself act basely in so doing, *yet* you cannot blame him, since you did not lend him your *Trust*, but sold it him; and what a Man hath purchased with his own Money, he thinks he may lawfully sell again.

THEREFORE, that Person who does wilfully give his Voice, for a *Knave*, or *Fool*, does his Endeavours to ruin not only his Country, and Himself, but his *Posterity*, and to be as bad or worse than the Person he chuses; and if the Majority of the *House* happen to be wiser, or honester, no Thanks are due to *him*; he did as much as he cou'd to debauch *It*; and therefore, for his Part, if none else were concern'd with him, it were no Matter, if he were forthwith made a Slave, to suffer the Effects of his own Mercenary Folly.

THE Old Lord Treasurer *Burleigh*, (who certainly was a great Statesman) did frequently deliver as a *Maxim*, or rather as a *Prophesy*, *That* England *can hardly be ruin'd, unless it be by her own Parliaments*; undoubtedly foreseeing, That other Oppressions, as being wrought by Violence, might, perhaps by Violence, be in Time shaken off again; whereas, when in a Parliamentary Way we are undone by a *Law*, that can never be revers'd, but by a down-right *Rebellion*: Because, the Parties advantag'd by *that Law*, will never agree to the Repealing of it; and a Rebellion is both so dangerous, and of so black a Character, that rich and considerate, or conscientious Men, will not engage therein; and therefore,

fore, no publick Miſchief is ſo irrecoverable, as that which is grown into a Law; and Nothing, you know, can become ſo, but what is brought about by *Parliament*.

SUCH is the happy Frame of our Government, ſo prudently and ſo ſtrongly have our *Anceſtors* ſecur'd *Liberty* and *Property*, (reſcued by gradual Attempts out of the Hands of encroaching Violence,) that you cannot be enſlav'd but with *Chains* of your own making: For, as you are never undone, 'till you are undone by *Law*; ſo, you can never be undone by a *Law*, 'till you chuſe the undoing *Legiſlators*: And, May not your Enemies add *Scorn* to their *Cruelty*, and pretend Juſtice for *both*, when they can urge, They had never enſlav'd *you*, if you had not bow'd down to the *Yoke*?

CONSIDER, The Repreſentatives of a Nation ought to conſiſt of the moſt wiſe, ſober, wealthy, and couragious of the People; not Men of mean Spirits, and ſordid Paſſions, that wou'd diſpoſe of your Intereſts for their own Uſe; or be ſubject to the Direction of any Great Man, to obtain ſome profitable Imployment. Thoſe that have *ample Eſtates* do, in ſome Manner, give *Hoſtages* to their Country; and ſuch muſt probably become Fools themſelves, before they can be made Knaves, to aſſiſt in their Country's Ruin: But, What cares the needy Senator how his Country fares, provided he thrives himſelf? And, What Good or Service can we expect from thoſe, who (it may be) cannot well appear without a Protection, either in or out of Parliament? Shall we entruſt our moſt valuable Treaſure with Perſons ſurrounded by gaping Creditors, or with prodigal Spend-thrifts? who being baſe in Principle and Action, will readily ſubmit to any Meaſures, that may tempt 'em to repair and enlarge their ill-manag'd Fortunes, tho' it were heartily to aſſiſt in the Publick Ruin: Beſides, chuſing Men of broken Fortunes, is the Way to make Trade decay, and bring whole Families to Miſery and Want; if *Beggars* ſhould become *Senators*, they will not be ſo apt to judge what is expedient for the Nation to *ſpare*, but by what Means they may get enough to *ſpend*.

METHINKS it wou'd look like an Affront, (if Experience did not ſhew that it is become neceſſary) to tell an *Engliſhman*, He ought not to receive any Bribe or Gratuity from Perſons, who with large Purſes and extravagant Treats, only entice you, to proſtitute your *Voices* for their *Elections*; for you may be aſſur'd, they would never bid ſo high for your *Votes*, if they had not laid Schemes to recover the *Expence*.

RATHER, therefore, chuſe a modeſt deſerving Man, with known Integrity, than the obſequious or complimental Perſon, whoſe more than ordinary Forwardneſs plainly foretells, he ſeeks not your Good, but his own, ſeparate from the Publick. By all Means, Let us not play either the Fool, or Knave, to neglect or betray the common Intereſt of our Country, by a baſe *Election*; Let neither *Fear*, *Flattery*, nor *Gain*, biaſs us: Let us but conſider what Loſers we ſhall be, if for a few Days Mirth, the Perſon we chuſe ſhou'd contribute to whole Years of Mourning, which we and our Poſterity may groan under.

YOU cannot be too cautious, how you make *Publick Choice* a Recompence for *Private Favours*: 'Tis not to pleaſe or gratify this or that Perſon, becauſe he is Great or Powerful, but the Nation's Intereſt ought to be your main Regard. Let no Engagements put you upon dangerous and prejudicial *Elections*, as you value your Lives and Liberties, and the true Conveyance of them to your *Poſterity*.

I HAVE heard it ſometimes objected, That we ſend Gentlemen too young to Parliament: But, I think, as the Law wiſely pronounces a Man at full Age, when he has attain'd Twenty One Years, we are to have more Regard for his Qualifications, than Contempt for his Youth; *ſome* being not only ſober and honeſt, but alſo knowing and expert in the Laws and Cuſtoms of their Country, whilſt it may happen an oppoſing Candidate may be turn'd of Fifty, without tolerable Experience or common Integrity; the *one* feeds us with growing Hopes, and the *other* fills us with Dread and Diſcontent: Therefore in ſuch Caſes, It is (I think)

think) the *Merit*, and not the *Age*, which ought moſt to be ſearch'd into.

HENCE it evidently appears, of what *vaſt Importance* it is at all Times, whenever *His Majeſty* pleaſes to iſſue out his *Writs* for a *Parliament*, to chuſe (as much as in us lies) *a good Houſe of Commons*; as we tender our Religion, Liberties, Eſtates, and Poſterity; upon our well or ill chuſing, depends our well or ill being: 'Tis here, as in War, or Marriages, there is no room for ſecond Errors; one Act may ruin a Nation beyond *Retrieve*.

BEING only and ſincerely concern'd for *Publick Good*, I have, with all poſſible Care, endeavour'd to avoid giving the leaſt Offence to all Sorts of Perſons; and ſhall (in like manner) without Diſtinction, conclude with this Remark, *That* Men of known and ſettled Abilities, who have gain'd *eſtabliſh'd Characters* for good Conduct and Probity in the Management of their *own Affairs*, (teſtified through the juſt Experience of their *Neighbourhood*, or otherwiſe *ſufficiently* made known,) ſeem the fitteſt and ableſt *Perſons* to be entruſted with the Care and Conduct of the *Publick Weal*: For, Men who have habituated themſelves to Juſtice, and Temperance, as flowing from a willing and free Choice, are moſt likely to preſerve the ſame *Virtue* and *Temper* at all Times, and in all Places, and if People wou'd allow themſelves ſome Leiſure for Reflection, they would eaſily perceive, That *(in the main)* Honeſt Hearts with Moderate Heads, wou'd ſerve the *Publick* to *moſt Advantage*; for a Man of *great Abilities* without *Integrity*, is but the more able to injure his *Country*, and ſerve *Himſelf*: It is much to be wiſh'd, That none may be choſe, but ſuch as are truly Wiſe and Good; but here we ſpeak only our *Wiſhes*; if we wou'd improve our *Expectations*, It behoves us, with what Diligence and Inquiry we can, to be *well ſatisfied* with whom we entruſt all that belongs to us as *Britons*, as well as the Happineſs of our *Innocent Poſterity*.

FINIS.

ARTS
SERIES
LIBRARY